



COLORADO COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SYSTEM

SB 13-178
RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The mission of the Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant Program is to train clinically competent and compassionate physician assistants to provide primary care to the medically underserved.

What is the risk?

The Eligibility section of the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant, 4th edition, require that all currently accredited PA programs confer graduate degrees to those students who enroll into a program after 2020. (New programs seeking accreditation in 2013 or later must immediately meet the eligibility requirement to issue a graduate degree or accreditation is denied.) A single institution MUST be clearly identified as the sponsor of the program, MUST be authorized under applicable law to provide a program of post secondary education, MUST be accredited by a recognized regional accrediting agency, and MUST be authorized by the accrediting agency to confer upon graduates of the PA program a graduate degree. Programs that are not in compliance with the degree requirement by January 1, 2021 will have their accreditation withdrawn. Without legislation allowing RRCC to offer the Master's degree, RRCC is at risk for losing accreditation. Once lost, the program cannot reapply and the program will close permanently.

If the RRCC PA program closes, this represents a reduction of 43% of the state's graduating PAs each year. Each primary care PA provides, on average, about 5000 patient visits per year. The loss of 32 graduates represents the potential loss of up to 160,000 patient visits per year in Colorado at a time when health care access in rural and underserved areas is becoming critical.

Why the Hurry?

During the Accreditation Review, the Commission for Physician Assistant Education, Inc. (ARC-PA) inquired about plans to meet the new eligibility standard. The ARC-PA will expect annual updates on the program's progress toward meeting the eligibility standard and can potentially issue a citation at any time for failure to make progress toward meeting the requirement.

Legislation is the first step of many that will be necessary to grant RRCC the authority to offer the degree. The following steps must be completed prior to January 1, 2021 or the program will lose its accreditation:

1. Approval by The Higher Learning Commission an affiliate of North Central Association (requires self-study and peer review visit)
2. Commission of Higher Education Degree Approval
3. Department of Education Title IV program approval

About the Program

- 25 month certificate program in PA studies and prepares the student for the national certifying exam (PANCE). Pass rates for this exam are typically at or above the national mean for all PA programs.
- Started in 1998, the program enrolls 32 students a year.
- Admission requirements include a BA degree and 2000 hours of paid medical experience.
- On average, there are 10+ applicants for each opening.
- RRCCPA graduates currently practice in at least 15 Colorado counties or communities considered underserved (communities include Pueblo, Buena Vista, Monte Vista, Evergreen, Greeley, Lonetree, Montrose, Johnstown, Frisco, Walden, Grand Junction, Rangely, Canyon City, Del Norte, Commerce City, and Ft. Morgan).



COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

- Recently received approximately \$1 million in federal and local grants to support its mission.
- Partnering with Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Counties, Inc., Special District Association, Colorado Health Foundation, University of Colorado PA Program, Area Health Education Centers, Centers for Rural Health, among many others, to increase health care access in rural areas.
- There is less than a 10% overlap in applicants between the two Colorado PA programs.
- There are 174 accredited PA programs in the United States. There are six other community college PA programs outside of Colorado.

Supporters of SB 13-178

Colorado Medical Society (CMS)
Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA)
Colorado Municipal League (CML)
Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC)
Special District Association (SDA)
Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN)
Wray Community District Hospital
Jefferson County Business Lobby (JCBL)

Steven Russell, MD: Medical Director, Wheat Ridge
Regional Center, Wheat Ridge
Virgilio Licon, MD: Vice-President, Salud Clinics
Kelet Robinson, MD: Director, Salud Clinic, Ft Lupton
Richard Doucet, Executive Director, Community Reach
Floyd Russak, MD: Director, East-West Health Centers
Rebecca Broda, PA-C: Salud Clinics, Ft Morgan
Sacramento Pimentel, MD: Burlington
Bill Conrad, PA-C: Wray
Kari Schoenwald, PA-C: Longmont
Bryn Kroto, PA-C: Monument
Kate Condon, PA-C: Pine
Juan Acosta, MD: Denver
Paul Meier, PA-C: Lakewood
Bau Tran, PharmD, PA-C: Denver
Heather Ross, MD: Denver
Valerie Lobato, PA-C: Pueblo
Wayne Dubois, PA-C: Denver
Brian Freeman, PA-C: Del Norte
David Donaldson, MD: Golden
Melinda O'Rourke, MD: Golden
Denis Newman, PA-C: Strasburg

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Jason Hopfer – 303/880-2023

Moirá Cullen – 303/868-8452

Mary Alice Mandarich – 303/594-0504

Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant Program
ARC-PA Eligibility Requirement Clarifying Definitions

ARC-PA	Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc.	This is the national accrediting organization for all physician assistant programs in the United States. Standards for Accreditation, 4 th edition are the current standards in effect for all PA programs.
Sponsoring Institution	The single academic institution that houses and is responsible for all aspects of a PA program. ARC-PA Standards for the responsibilities of the sponsoring institution are found in the Eligibility Section and Section A of the ARC-PA Standards, 4 th edition	The sponsoring institution is Red Rocks Community College
Affiliate Institution	Per Standard A1.01 and A1.02, an affiliate institution is any institution involved in the provision of academic and/or clinical education for the PA program for which there must be written and signed agreements between the sponsoring institution and the affiliate.	The RRCC PA program has an affiliation agreement with St. Francis University (Loretto, PA) for the provision of the masters curriculum content and the conferring of a masters of medical science degree on its graduates.
Eligibility Requirement (Sections of the ARC-PA Standards, 4 th edition)	<p>A single institution <i>must</i> be clearly identified as the sponsor of the program and <i>must</i> be authorized under applicable law to provide a program of post-secondary education.</p> <p>It <i>must</i> be accredited by a recognized regional accrediting agency and <i>must</i> be authorized by this agency to confer upon graduates of the PA program a baccalaureate or graduate degree.</p> <p>Programs accredited prior to 2013 that do not currently offer a graduate degree <i>must</i> transition to conferring a graduate degree, which <i>should</i> be awarded by the sponsoring institution, upon all PA students who matriculate into the program after 2020.</p>	<p>The single institution identified is RRCC</p> <p>RRCC is accredited by the HLC</p> <p>RRCC PA Program currently offers a masters degree through affiliation with St. Francis.</p> <p>RRCC, as the sponsoring institution, does not meet this section of the eligibility requirement.</p>
Must	The term used to designate requirements that are compelled or mandatory. "Must" indicates an absolute requirement.	(ARC-PA Standards, 4 th edition glossary)
Should	The term used to designate requirements that must be met unless there is a compelling reason, acceptable to the ARC-PA, for not complying. (Programs not meeting any component(s) of a <i>should</i> standard are expected to describe in detail why they are unable to do so. A program or institution may be cited for failing to comply with a requirement that includes the term 'should'.)	(ARC-PA Standards, 4 th edition glossary)

Comparison of Selected PA Programs' Masters Curriculum

	RED ROCKS	Medex (Washington)	South Dakota	Kentucky	Shenendoah (Virginia)
Regional Accreditation	HLC	NWCCU	HLC	SACS	SACS
BASIC SCIENCES (ARC-PA standard B1.01, B2.02)					
	Anatomy	Anatomy & Physiology	Human Gross Anatomy	Anatomy	Anatomy I-II
	Biochemistry	Basic Sciences for PAs	Embryology	Intro to Human Disease	Medical Physiology & Genetics
	Pathophysiology	Pathophysiology	Human Physiology	Human Physiology	Neuroscience
	Physiology				
SOCIAL SCIENCES and PROFESSIONAL COURSES (B1.05, B1.06, B1.08, B2.04, B2.08, B2.11, B2.12, B2.14, B2.15, B2.16, B2.17)					
	Behavioral Medicine	Behavioral Medicine I-III	Physician Assistant Professional Issues	Psychosocial Factors in Medicine	Health Promotion, Disease Prevention & Community
	Professional Seminar I-VI	Professional Role Development I-III		Overview of Healthcare Delivery	Introduction to the Physician Assistant Profession
				Intro to PA Profession	Healthcare Systems & Issues in Healthcare
				Patient Management & Evaluation	Humanities for the PA Profession
CLINICAL MEDICINE (B1.07, B2.03, B2.05, B2.07)					
	Clinical Medicine I-III	Basic Clinical Skills	Clinical Medicine I-II	Clinical Lecture Series I-II	Medical Interview & Physical Assessment I-III
	History and Physical Exam I-III	Technical Skills I-III		Clinical Lab Procedures	Diagnostic Tests and Procedures I-III
	Problem Based Learning I-VI	Adult Medicine I-II		Clinical Methods	Clinical Medicine I-II
	ACLS/PALS	Maternal Child Health I-II		Disease Prevention & Health Maintenance	PA Clinical Skills
		Emergency Medicine I-II		Survey of Geriatric Medicine	Women's Health
PHARMACOLOGY (B2.02)					
	Pharmacology I-III	Patient Management I-II	Pharmacology	Pharmacology I-II	Pharmacotherapeutics I-II
	Adv Pharm (SF)				
RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE BASED MEDICINE (B2.10)					
	Professional Seminar	Investigative Skills	Research Perspectives	Research Methods	Epidemiology, Research & Medical Literature
	Research Methodology (SF)	MEDEX Focused Study - rural/underserved	Masters Project	Masters Project I & II	Capstone Seminar
	Clinical Project (SF)	Capstone Project			
CLINICAL CLERKSHIPS (B3)					
	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
All accredited PA programs (currently 174) must meet the ARC-PA curriculum content standards (Section B1-B3)					



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)

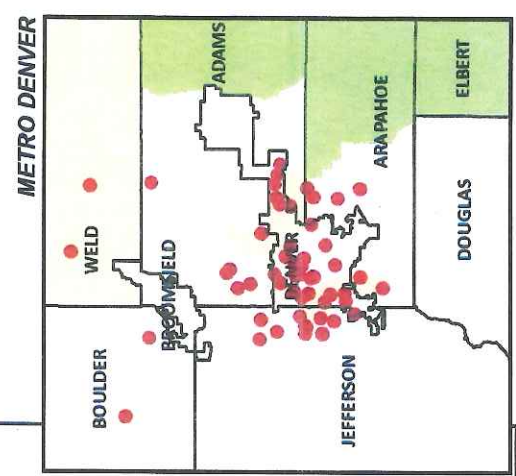
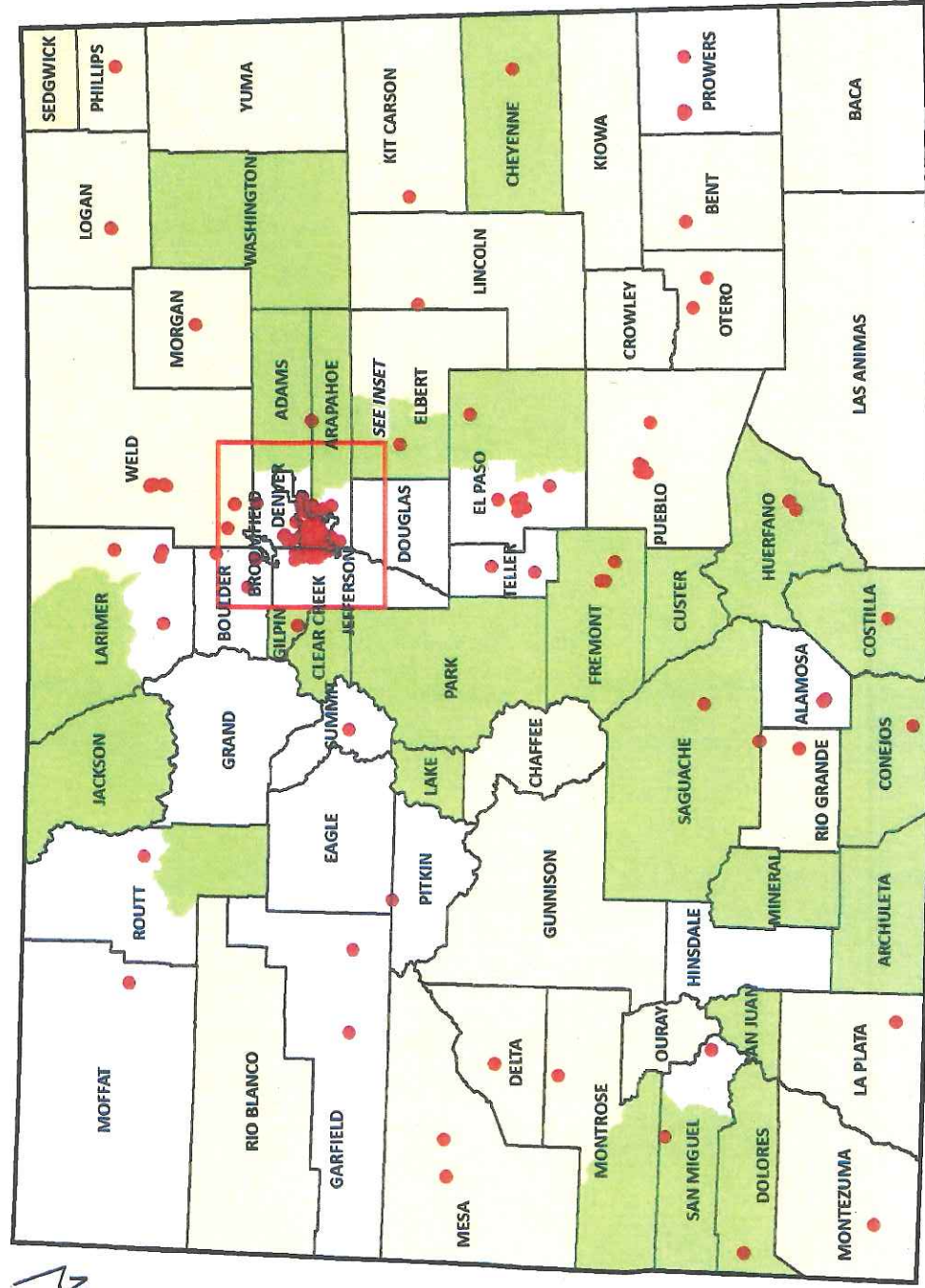
Map Prepared By:
Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment GIS

Primary Care HPSA types

- Facility Designation
- Geographic
- Low-Income
- Not Designated

Data Current as of February 2013

For information on how to develop
a Health Professional Shortage Area
Application for your community, call
303-692-2466,
or visit the Primary Care Office
website at the
Colorado Department of
Public Health and Environment:
www.cdph.state.co.us/pp/primarycare



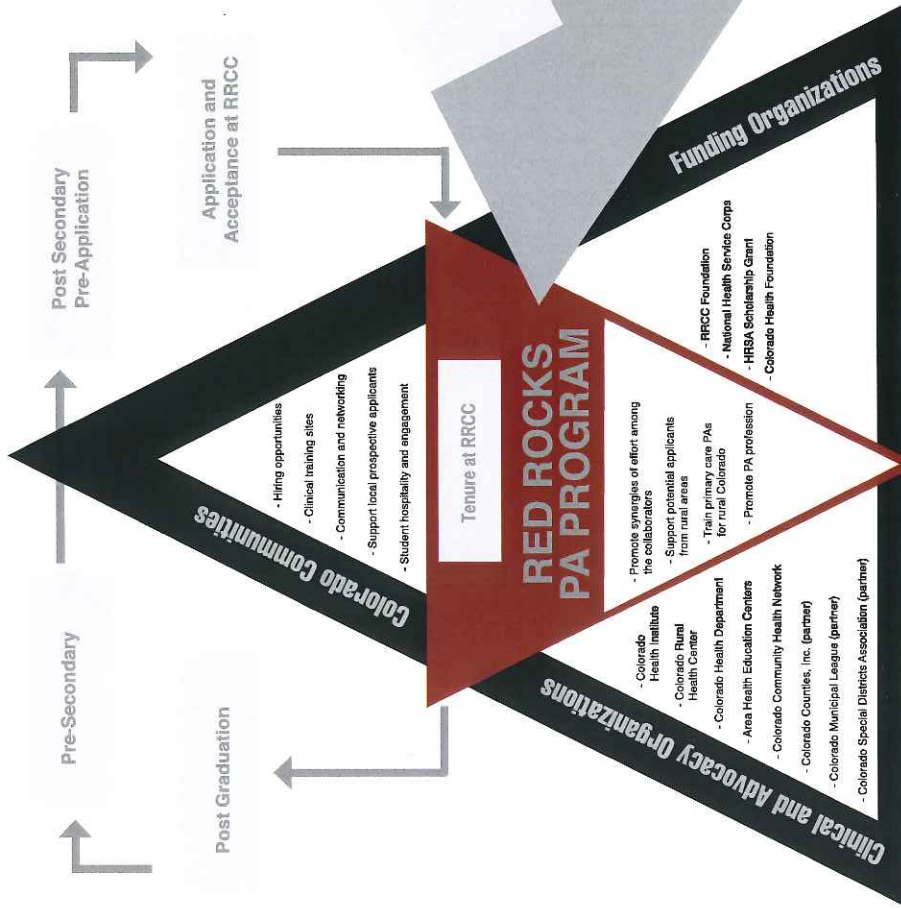
Source: Shortage Designation Branch, HRSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

0 15 30 60 Miles

Map Created February 4, 2013

Red Rocks Physician Assistant Program

OUR MISSION WORKS FOR YOU

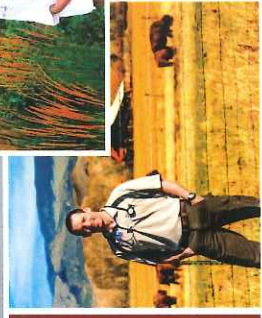


Our mission is to train clinically competent and compassionate physician assistants to provide primary care to the medically underserved.



VALERIE LOBATO
2011 Red Rocks Physician Assistant Graduate

"I am making a difference in my patients' lives by keeping them and the community healthy."



BRIAN FREEMAN
2010 Red Rocks Physician Assistant Graduate

"In the small town setting, you really get a chance to experience your community... your children play soccer with your patients' children and you get to catch up on life at the local gas station."



AVERY MARZULLA
2011 Red Rocks Physician Assistant Graduate

"The difference comes every day when I show each of my patients that I care about their well-being... they respond with a smile."

Colorado Collaboration for Rural Healthcare Access

Community Hospital

February 11, 2013

Red Rocks Community College
Physician Assistant Program
Health Careers
Attn: Debra Nickel, PA, PhD
PO Box 38
Lakewood, CO 80228-1255

Re: Recent Students

Dear Dr. Nickel:

We recently received feedback from one of our Medical Staff members, Brad Baldwin, D.O., regarding recent PA students that have completed rotations with Dr. Baldwin. Dr. Baldwin commented on how impressed he is by the last 4 PA students he has had and their knowledge base.

It is a pleasure to hear such great things from our preceptors about the PA students we receive. We believe the students in question are Kelly Burke, Jamie Stambaugh, Nicole Chasnow, and Courtney Voorus. Please let these students know how highly Dr. Baldwin thought of each of them.

Respectfully,



Donald L. Nicolay, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer



My name is Rebecca Broda. I graduated from the Red Rocks Community College PA program in August, 2012. I am currently serving my hometown of Fort Morgan, CO as a Physician Assistant at Salud Family Health Centers. As a non-traditional student with experience as a Respiratory Therapist, I believe I was a better match for the RRCC PA Program than for the program at a University. Had it not been for RRCC, I would likely not be practicing medicine at this time, which means that between 90-100 patients per week in my community would potentially not receive medical care.

RRCC is a well-established PA program, and I would hate to see it close its' doors, especially while there is such a shortage of primary care providers in Colorado. One of my mentors, who encouraged me to pursue this career, is a PA who was in one of the first graduating classes at RRCC. He is very highly thought of in our community, and testimony to the high-quality PA that the RRCC program educates. Please support this bill for RRCC which will benefit the health of the people of Colorado.

Rebecca Broda, RT, PA-C
Salud Family Health Center
Fort Morgan, CO



I grew up in a very rural community in southeast Colorado near Manzanola. After high school, I attended CU Boulder for my bachelor's degree. Although CU was a great experience, academically I struggled to keep grades that were up to my standards. After graduation, I went back closer to home in Pueblo, CO. When I decided to pursue a career as a PA, I finished my prerequisites at a community college and did very well.

The Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant Program was the best fit for me because of the community feel and the small class size.

I chose RRCC PA program because I believe strongly in the mission to train competent and compassionate physician assistants to provide primary care to medically underserved. Growing up in a single parent household, we had limited resources and no insurance. I am a proud, healthy product of community health centers.

Community health is my passion and that is where I practice today. I am back in Pueblo, CO at Pueblo Community Health Center. If the RRCC PA Program went away, it would be less opportunity for any other people like myself with my story to fulfill their calling to serve others and their communities

Valerie Lobato, PA-C
Pueblo Community Health Center
Pueblo, Colorado